

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 01598 01 OF 02 291737Z

71

ACTION EUR-12

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SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 SCCT-01 AS-01 /065 W

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R 291711Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6050

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USMISSION USBERLIN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 01598

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SP, FR, GW, PO, IT

SUBJECT: SPD VIEWS ON SOUTHERN EUROPEAN SOCIALIST
MEETING IN PARIS AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SPAIN

REFS: A. STATE 20961 NOTAL B. PARIS 2487- NOTAL.

BEGIN SUMMARY: AN SPD OFFICIAL, VERONIKA ISENBERG, A
MEMBER OF THE SI STUDY GROUP WHICH VISITED SPAIN JAN.
14-19 AND AN OBSERVER AT THE SOCIALIST MEETING IN PARIS
MET WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS JANUARY 28. SHE CONFIRMED
EARLIER REPORTS THAT SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE SOCIAL
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PAGE 02 BONN 01598 01 OF 02 291737Z

DEMOCRATS WERE UNHAPPY WITH MITTERRAND'S ATTEMPT TO

FORCE A COMMON "VOLKSFRONT" STRATEGY UPON SOUTHERN EUROPEAN SOCIALIST PARTIES. SHE EMPHASIZED THAT BOTH SOARES AND GONZALEZ WERE REALISTS AND WELL AWARE OF THE COMMUNIST THREAT TO DEMOCRACY IN THEIR COUNTRIES. GONZALEZ'S PSOE WAS CONSCIOUS OF THE SPANISH COMMUNIST'S TACTICS AND HAS REFUSED ALL OFFERS TO MERGE FORCES. ACCORDING TO ISENBERG, THEY WERE CONCERNED THAT THE RECENT PSOE RESOLUTION CRITICAL OF THE US-SPANISH BASE AGREEMENT WILL DAMAGE PSOE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. CONVERSATIONS WITH SPD POLITICIANS CONFIRM THAT GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ARE HOPEFUL GONZALEZ WILL BE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH IN SPAIN - ONCE OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE LEGALIZED - WHAT SOARES HAS DONE IN PORTUGAL. END SUMMARY.

1. AT HER REQUEST, VERONIKA ISENBERG, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SOUTHERN EUROPE IN THE INTERNATIONAL SECTION OF SPD HEADQUARTERS, MET WITH THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR AND AN EMBASSY OFFICER TO DISCUSS THE PARIS SOCIALIST MEETING AND SI STUDY VISIT TO SPAIN. ISENBERG IS A BRIGHT AND ARTICULATE LADY WHO REFLECTS THE THINKING OF KEY GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHERN EUROPE.

2. MS. ISENBERG REMARKED THAT THE SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS WERE UNHAPPY WITH MITTERRAND'S ATTEMPT TO FORM A SOUTHERN EUROPEAN BLOC TO SUPPORT HIS STRATEGY OF ALLIANCE WITH THE COMMUNISTS. ACCORDING TO ISENBERG, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN BOTH IBERIAN COUNTRIES WERE WELL AWARE OF THE THREAT THE COMMUNISTS POSE TO DEMOCRACY. THEIR SITUATION FORCED THEM TO ACCEPT PARTICIPATION BY THE COMMUNISTS IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM, AND ON OCCASION, IN THE GOVERNMENT, BUT THEY REMAINED EXTREMELY WARY OF THEM. THE SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE FELT THAT MITTERRAND HAD TRIED, IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE, TO COVER UP THE DIFFERENCES AT THE CONFERENCE OVER THE QUESTION OF ALLIANCE WITH COMMUNIST PARTIES. SHE REMARKED THAT DESPITE MITTERRAND'S CLAIMS TO THE CONTRARY, HIS PURPOSE IN CALLING THE MEETING TOGETHER HAD BEEN TO DEVELOP A COMMON SOUTHERN EUROPEAN SOCIALIST

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BONN 01598 01 OF 02 291737Z

STRATEGY BASED ON HIS ALLIANCE WITH THE COMMUNISTS IN FRANCE.

3. MS. ISENBERG RETURNED TO THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC FROM HER VISIT TO SPAIN IMPRESSED WITH GONZALEZ AND THE PSOE. MEMBERSHIP, SHE SAID, WAS BETWEEN FIVE AND SIX THOUSAND AND THE PSOE HAD TO TURN AWAY APPLICANTS BECAUSE OF THE FEAR THAT THEY MIGHT BE GOVERNMENT OR COMMUNIST AGENTS.

SHE BELIEVED THAT WHEN THE OPPOSITION PARTIES WERE MADE
LEGAL IN SPAIN, THE PSOE COULD GROW TO FIFTY OR SIXTY
THOUSAND MEMBERS QUICKLY. SHE REMARKED THAT BEFORE THE
REVOLUTION SOARES HAD CLAIMED THAT THE ILLEGAL
PORTUGUESE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS NUMBERED SIX THOUSAND BUT
THE SPD WAS CONVINCED THAT THEY HAD NOT NUMBERED MORE
THAN SIX HUNDRED. NEVERTHELESS, THE PORTUGUESE SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC PARTY BECAME QUICKLY THE LARGEST PARTY IN
PORTUGAL ONCE POLITICAL PARTIES WERE LEGALIZED.

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PAGE 01 BONN 01598 02 OF 02 292000Z

71

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 01598

4. SPANISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS HAD TOLD HER THE STRATEGY OF THE COMMUNISTS WAS TO PRETEND THAT THEY HAD GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE PSOE AND THAT A MERGER BETWEEN THE TWO OPPOSITION ROOF ORGANIZATIONS WAS IMMINENT. ACCORDING TO ISENBERG, THAT SIMPLY WAS NOT THE CASE AND THE PSOE WAS RESISTING ANY MERGER WHICH, UNDER THE COMMUNIST OFFER, WOULD IN REALITY BE A SWALLOWING UP OF THE NON-COMMUNIST OPPOSITION PARTIES. MS. ISENBERG SAID THAT THE SPD WAS GIVING BOTH FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL SUPPORT TO THE PSOE. SHE CONFIRMED THAT WILLY BRANDT AND THE SPD HAD, ON OCCASION, INTERVENED WITH THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BONN 01598 02 OF 02 292000Z

SPANISH GOVERNMENT WHEN SOCIAL DEMOCRATS WERE ARRESTED.

5. ACCORDING TO ISENBERG, THERE REMAINS A RESIDUE OF ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT AMONG PSOE MEMBERS BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED THAT THE U.S. HAD SUPPORTED FRANCO MUCH TOO LONG. THIS SENTIMENT CONTRIBUTED TO THE DECISION OF THE PSOE NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO PASS A RESOLUTION CRITICAL OF THE U.S.-SPANISH BASE AGREEMENT. IN ADDITION, GONZALEZ AND OTHERS FELT THAT THE TIMING OF THE BASE AGREEMENT HAD BEEN PREMATURE BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT HAD YET TO TAKE CONCRETE STEPS TO REPEAL ANTI-DEMOCRATIC LAWS. WHILE IT IS TRUE, SHE SAID, THAT THE SPANISH AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN MORE "RELAXED" ABOUT APPLYING SUCH LAWS RECENTLY, THE LAWS (SUCH AS THE ANTI-TERRORISM LAWS) REMAINED ON THE BOOKS AND THE THREAT OF ARREST AND HARRASSMENT HUNG OVER THE DEMOCRATIC OBPOSITION.

6. IT WAS CLEAR THAT MS. ISENBERG HAD BEEN SENT BY SPD HEADQUARTERS TO TALK TO THE EMBASSY IN ORDER TO INFORM US ABOUT SPD ATTITUDES REGARDING SPAIN AND BECAUSE OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATS' CONCERN THAT MIDUNDER- STANDINGS MAY BE DEVELOPING BETWEEN THE PSOE AND THE U.S. OTHER SPD POLITICIANS HAVE CONFIRMED THE HIGH HOPES THE SPD HAS FOR FELIPE GONZALEZ AND THE PSOE. THEY MAY HOWEVER BE SOMEWHAT OVERLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN PORTUGAL. FOR EXAMPLE, AN IMPORTANT SPD BUNDESTAG DEPUTY TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER RECENTLY THAT THE PROBLEM OF THE COMMUNISTS IN PORTUGAL HAS BEEN SOLVED ("ERLEDIGT"). WHILE SUCH EUPHORIA MAY BE DANGEROUS, THE FACT REMAINS THAT THE SPD IS PROUD OF ITS SUPPORT FOR SOARES VIS-A-VIS THE COMMUNISTS IN PORTUGAL, AND BELIEVES THAT THIS SUPPORT CAN PLAY A KEY ROLE IN HELPING TO ADVANCE THE CAUSE OF DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN.

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